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State Dept. Unit to Monitor Soviet Disinformation

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The State Department, amid revelations about the administration's misuse of the U.S. news media to deceive Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, yesterday announced the establishment of an office to expose Soviet efforts to mislead world opinion about American foreign policy.

Department spokesman Charles E. Redman said Secretary of State George P. Shultz established the Office of Disinformation, Analysis and Response to comply with a July 1985 congressional directive.

The directive asked Shultz to investigate the need for a U.S. effort to combat Soviet "active measures" and campaigns of "disinformation" against the United States.

"Active measures" is the term used in the intelligence community to refer to Soviet covert use of front groups, forgeries and media manipulation to promote support for Moscow's policies abroad and discredit those of the United States.

Redman said the new office will not begin to function for "some months" and is to analyze and determine ways to respond to Soviet and other hostile "active measures."

"For example, they'll keep a data base on Soviet active measures, they'll work on talking points, guidance [and] briefings. They'll prepare written analyses on current active measures," he said.

Heading the new office will be Kathleen Bailey, deputy assistant secretary for interdepartmental affairs and research in the depart-

ment's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. She chairs an interagency body known as the Active Measures Working Group, which deals with the same issue.

It was not immediately clear why the new office is needed in addition to the interagency group.

Redman said Shultz sent to Congress Aug. 29 a report on anti-U.S. disinformation and propaganda campaigns conducted by the Soviets. In it, Shultz said he recommended, and President Reagan approved, establishment of the special State Department office, Redman said.

The Washington Post disclosed last week that the White House approved and launched a disinformation campaign in August, using U.S. and foreign news media to lead Gadhafi into believing that Libya was about to be attacked by the United States or that he would be ousted in a coup.

Administration officials denied that they had deliberately lied to the press, but Shultz said last Thursday that he saw nothing wrong in using the media's "predictable tendencies" to report things the administration tries to keep secret.

He cited a quote from Britain's World War II prime minister, Winston Churchill, who said, "In time of war, the truth is so precious, it must be attended by a bodyguard of lies."

Shultz said the United States was "pretty darn close" to being in a formal state of war with Gadhafi.

Asked whether the new office would also investigate incidents of "active measures" by the United States against foreign countries, Redman said brusquely: "I gave you what this office is supposed to do."